The Date of Anaximenes

By G. B. Kerferd, Manchester

The manuscripts of Diogenes Laertius II 3 have γεγένηται μὲν (sc. Ἀναξιμένης), καθά φησιν Ἀπολλόδωρος τῇ ἑξηκοστῇ τρίτῃ Ὀλυμπιάδι (Ol. 63=528–5 B.C.), ἐτελεύτησε δὲ περὶ τὴν Σάρδεων ἅλωσιν. This as it stands makes sense only if the Σάρδεων ἅλωσις can be referred to the capture of Sardis by the Ionians at the beginning of the Ionian revolt (Her. V 100) and not to the more famous capture by the Persians about 546 B.C. But the capture by the Ionians is not known elswhere to have been used for fixing chronological epochs, and Diels (Rh. Mus. 31 [1876] 27) following Simson changed the text to read: γεγένηται μέν, καθά φησιν Ἀπολλόδωρος, περὶ τὴν Σάρδεων ἅλωσιν, ἐτελεύτησε δὲ τῇ ἑξηκοστῇ τρίτῃ Ὀλυμπιάδι. He sought support for this change in Suda s.v. Ἀναξιμένης (VS⁶ 13 A 2): γέγονε [ἐν τῇ νε Ὀλυμπιάδι (Ol. 55 = 560—557 B.C.)] ἐν τῇ Σάρδεων ἁλώσει ὅτε Κῦρος ὁ Πέρσης Κροῖσον καθεῖλεν, and in Hippolytus, Ref. I 7, 9 = Dox. 561=VS⁶ 13 A 7: οὗτος ἤκμασε περὶ ἔτος πρῶτον τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ὀγδόης Ὀλυμπιάδος (Ol. 58. 1 = 548/7 B.C.). In the second passage Diels would alter πρῶτον to τρίτον, giving the date 546/5 B.C.

Diels' alteration of the text of Diogenes was accepted by Jacoby (Apollodors Chronik p. 193, FGrH 244 F 66 and commentary) and by most subsequently. It is printed without warning in R. D. Hicks' edition of Diogenes Laertius in the Loeb Series. But an important objection to this alteration does not seem to have been noticed. Diogenes ends his brief notice of Anaximenes with two apocryphal letters from Anaximenes to Pythagoras. The first reports the death of Thales, and the second (D.L. II 5) says that Pythagoras did well to go to Croton where he can live in peace. οἱ δὲ Αἰακέος παῖδες ἄλαστα κακὰ ἔρδουσι καὶ Μιλησίους οὐκ ἐπιλείπουσι αἰσυμνῆται. δεινὸς δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ ὁ Μήδων βασιλεύς, οὐκ ἤν γε ἐθέλωμεν δασμοφορέειν· ἀλλὰ μέλλουσι δὴ ἀμφὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίης· ἁπάντων Ἴωνες Μήδοις καθίστασθαι ἐς πόλεμον· καταστᾶσι δὲ οὐκέτι ἐλπὶς ἡμῖν σωτηρίας.

The letter concludes with a comparison between the enviable situation of Pythagoras and the unenviable one of Anaximenes. It is argued here that the words spaced out can only refer to the approach of the Ionian revolt. Tannery (Pour l'histoire de la science hellène² 48) strangely supposed that the letter referred to the situation after the capture of Sardis by Cyrus and before the Persians had captured Miletus. "Peu importe", he then remarks, "à cet égard, que la tradition dont il s'agit ici n'ait aucune valeur historique, qu'elle soit notamment en contradiction

avec le récit d'Hérodote, d'après lequel Milet traita sans délai avec les Perses."
In fact it is clear that the letter envisages a situation in which Miletus is already
subject to Persia and is planning revolt. Unger (Philologus Suppl. IV 536) and
Jacoby (*Apollodors Chronik* 195) perceived that as the letter purports to be written
to Pythagoras in Italy its dramatic date should be after Ol. 62. 1=532 B.C., since
this in all probability was Apollodorus' date for Pythagoras arrival at Croton.
But Jacoby claims that the letter refers to a period when Polycrates was still
tyrant at Samos, and so he would put its dramatic date before Ol. 63. 4=525 B.C.
which Pliny *H. N.* 33, 27 gave as the date of the death of Polycrates. But Poly-
crates is not mentioned by name. The sons of the elder Aeaces were Polycrates,
Pantagnotus and Syloson. Taken by itself the phrase Αἰακέος παῖδες might be
thought to refer to the period of joint rule before the establishment of Polycrates
as sole tyrant, c. 533 B.C. (cf. Her. III 39). But the phrase ἄλαστα κακά would
more naturally refer to the infamous rule of Syloson after the death of Polycrates
and early in the reign of Darius (cf. Strabo XIV 1, 17; Her. III 149). Syloson was
succeeded by his son the younger Aeaces before the Scythian expedition of Darius,
and this Aeaces ruled down to the beginning of the Ionian Revolt (Her. VI 13).
He also could be covered by the term Αἰακέος παῖς (cf. for this use of παῖδες Her.
IV 145, 3), and probably the writer of the letter is intending a general description
of the situation in the last twenty years of the century. At Miletus the αἰσυμνῆται
will most naturally be Histiaeus and Aristogoras, rather than any ordinary
magistrates named αἰσυμνῆται (for which cf. Milet VII 17), since we know from
Aristotle that the term was used in the sense of tyrant (*Pol.* 1285 a 29 seqq.). More
important than all such details, about which the forger could so easily have made
mistakes, is the emphatic statement μέλλουσι δὴ ἀμφὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίης ἁπάντων
Ἴωνες Μήδοις καθίστασθαι ἐς πόλεμον. The words ἀμφὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίης ἁπάντων
must refer to a general movement of revolt, and the following sentence καταστᾶσι
δὲ οὐκέτι ἐλπὶς ἡμῖν σωτηρίας seems to show a consciousness of the ultimate fate
of Miletus and the end of the revolt.

Accordingly it seems quite clear that the second letter is intended to refer to the
situation in Ionia towards the approach of the Ionian revolt, and its composer
must have supposed that Anaximenes was alive towards the end of the century,
considerably later than 528 B.C. Diogenes Laertius not only reproduces this letter,
but also gives a statement purporting to come from Apollodorus about the dates
of Anaximenes which accords perfectly with the implications of the letter. Accord-
ingly we are not justified in emending the text of the chronological statement.
But can we believe that Apollodorus really said what the manuscript tradition
of Diogenes Laertius would make him say? While this must remain uncertain, a
further discussion of the passage in the Suda and the statement in Hippolytus
may show that this is not impossible. The passage in the Suda cannot stand as we
find it in the manuscript tradition. Diels believed that the number of the Olympiad
war an insertion from Eusebius or a similar chronicle, since the same Olympiad

is given as the floruit of Anaximenes by Eusebius (Ol. 55. 4=557/6 B.C., VS⁶
13 A 3), and elsewhere it appears to be given as the date of the beginning of the
reign of Cyrus (Suda s.v. Ἀνακρέων). But it would still be an extremely strange
insertion for the date of the capture of Sardis. More attractive is the suggestion
of Nietzsche (Rh. Mus. 24 [1869] 264) that ⟨ἐτελεύτησε δ'⟩ should be inserted
after ὀλυμπιάδι. This gives a more natural sense to the second ἐν than if it followed
γέγονε. In this case one might suppose that the Suda has got hold of an early
date for the floruit of Anaximenes, in fact the date given by Eusebius. Finding
that the death of Anaximenes was associated with a capture of Sardis in earlier
tradition, the author of the Suda or his sources would naturally identify the cap-
ture with the famous capture by the Persians c. 546 B.C. In view of the date for
the floruit it is highly unlikely that the notice in the Suda is in any sense a direct
reproduction of the notice in Apollodorus.

In the case of Hippolytus Diels would alter the acme from περὶ ἔτος πρῶτον
τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ὀγδόης ὀλυμπιάδος (Ol. 58. 1=548/7 B.C.) to περὶ ἔτος τρίτον
τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ὀγδόης ὀλυμπιάδος (Ol. 58. 3=546/5 B.C.) to make the date accord
with the supposed date of Apollodorus for the capture of Sardis by Cyrus. Diels
subsequently showed that Hippolytus drew the main part of his information for
his first book from two ultimate sources, Theophrastus and Sotion, using the latter
probably in the Epitome of Heraclides Lembos. But Diels made an exception in
the case of the short chronological statements in Hippolytus I 1, 4; 6, 7; 7, 9;
8, 13 and 14, 1, all of which he maintained came from Apollodorus (cf. *Doxographi
Graeci* 132 ff.). This last derivation requires to be reconsidered. I 1, 4 says of Thales
ἐγένετο δὲ κατὰ Κροῖσον. This rests on the information in Herodotus I 75. Sotion
made statements in this form as we know from his statement that Xenophanes
κατ' Ἀναξίμανδρον ἦν (D.L. IX. 18=VS⁶ 21 A 1), and it appears from D.L. I 38
that Sosicrates said of Thales γέγονε κατὰ Κροῖσον (cf. Rohde, Rh. Mus. 33 [1878]
211 ff., Jacoby, *Apollodors Chronik* 176–8). Thus there is no need to suppose that
this particular statement comes from Apollodorus. I 14, 1 says of Xenophanes
οὗτος ἕως Κύρου διέμεινεν. This seems to represent a different tradition from
Apollodorus' figure for his floruit, Ol. 60=540–37 B.C. (D.L. IX. 20=VS⁶ 21 A 1).
Moreover the statement about Xenophanes in Hippolytus is immediately followed
by a single isolated sentence which Diels was able to show conclusively must come
from Sotion (Dox. 146). I 6, 7 has of Anaximander οὗτος ἐγένετο κατὰ ἔτος
τρίτον τῆς τεσσαρακοστῆς δευτέρας ὀλυμπιάδος (Ol. 42. 3=610/9 B.C.). This
accords exactly with Apollodorus' statement that Anaximander was 64 in Ol. 58.
2=547/6 B.C. (D.L. II 2=VS⁶ 12 A 1), but as Apollodorus' statement in all
probability derives from an equivalent statement by Anaximander himself, we
cannot say that Hippolytus must be drawing on Apollodorus. An earlier calculator
such as Sotion himself might have reached the same result from the same evidence.
That Sotion did indulge in calculations of this sort seems shown by his statement
about the age of Timon (D.L. IX 112). Hippolytus I 7, 9 is the passage about

Anaximenes at present under discussion. There remains Hippolytus I 8, 13 where he says of Anaxagoras οὗτος ἤκμασεν ἔτους πρώτου τῆς ὀγδοηκοστῆς ὀγδόης ὀλυμπιάδος, καθ᾽ ὃν καιρὸν καὶ Πλάτωνα λέγουσι γεγενῆσθαι. It is not possible here to enter upon a full discussion of the vexed question of the chronological statements about Anaxagoras. It will be sufficient to say that Diels followed by Jacoby brings the text of Hippolytus into accord with the statements of Apollodorus recorded by Diogenes Laertius (II 7) 1. by altering the text of Hippolytus from ἤκμασεν to ἐτελεύτησεν, and 2. by altering the text of Diogenes so that Apollodorus' date for the death of Anaxagoras is no longer with the manuscripts Ol. 78, 1=468/7 B.C., but Ol. 88, 1=428/7 B.C. But our suspicions are aroused at least about the alteration to the text of Hippolytus when we find that Sotion made Cleon the prosecutor of Anaxagoras (D.L. II 12=VS⁶ 59 A 1). This suggests that Sotion put the trial of Anaxagoras after the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, and he may well have placed the floruit at the time of the trial and equated this with the date of the birth of Plato. As in the case of Xenophanes, the statement about Anaxagoras in Hippolytus is immediately followed by a single sentence which Diels rightly saw derives from Sotion (*Dox.* 146).

In the light of this brief discussion it should be clear that it is only by a good deal of effort and ingenuity that the chronological statements of Hippolytus can be made even to accord with the statements of Apollodorus. In the case of Anaximenes we are not justified in altering the date of the Olympiad since Hippolytus is more probably taking his dates from Sotion than from Apollodorus. The supposition that Hippolytus' date for Anaximenes refers to the capture of Sardis is gratuitous—it is more likely to be connected with the statement that Thales died in the fifty-eighth Olympiad which appears to come from Sosicrates in Diogenes Laertius I 38. There is consequently no real weight in arguments as to Apollodorus' date for Anaximenes drawn from the statements either of the Suda or of Hippolytus.

Let us return now to Apollodorus' statement about Anaximenes as preserved in the text of Diogenes. The original difficulty here was that the use of the capture of Sardis in 498 B.C. as an epoch has no parallel. But some light on this difficulty may be shed by a statement in the Proœmium in Pseudo-Scymnus which is in fact a description of the Chronicle of Apollodorus. We read vs. 25–6 καταριθμούμενος | πόλεων ἁλώσεις, ἐκτοπίσμους στρατοπέδων, etc. This suggests that Apollodorus *listed* the successive occasions on which cities were captured as a regular feature of his Chronicle. It is clear from the contents of the chronicle described in Pseudo-Scymnus that the ἐπιφανῶν ἀνδρῶν βίοι must have formed only a small part of the whole, although fragments concerning them constitute the greater part of what survives. Accordingly there is no need to conclude that Apollodorus used only one capture of Sardis as a point for fixing chronology. That the second capture also was famous in its own way can be seen from Herodotus who regarded it as an ἀρχὴ κακῶν (V 97, 3).

If the text of Diogenes Laertius is retained, Apollodorus would appear to have placed the acme of Anaximenes in 528–5 B.C., or rather one of those years, since Apollodorus' own dates were expressed in terms of Athenian archons, and his death about 498 B.C. This involves taking γεγένηται in the sense "flourished" rather than in the sense 'was born', but this meaning was required also on Diels' interpretation of the evidence. The use of the perfect active, γέγονε in this sense seems sufficiently established, cf. D.L. I 38. But the grounds for taking γεγένηται in this sense are much more doubtful and have recently been called in question[1]. Of the two other cases certainly referrable to Apollodorus where this term occurs, in one (Thales, D.L. I 37) it must mean 'was born', and in the other example (Anaxagoras, D.L. II 7) it is usually supposed to mean 'was born' and is so understood by Diels and Jacoby. It clearly has this meaning in the passage quoted above from Hippolytus where it refers to the birth of Plato (Hippolytus I 8, 13=Dox. 563). If γεγένηται means 'was born' in the passage of Diogenes referring to Anaximenes, this would seem completely to exclude the traditional interpretation of the passage: if Anaximenes was born in 546/5 B.C. he would be only 18 if he died in 528 B.C. and only 20 if he died at the end of the Olympiad. It does not seem possible that Apollodorus could have assigned only this length for his life. But if he was born in 528–5 B.C. an died 498/7 B.C. no difficulty would arise since a span of some thirty years would be sufficient. We have no reason for supposing that he lived on into middle or old age.

On the view taken in this paper there were at least two chronologies current for Anaximenes in the hellenistic period, an early chronology of which traces are found in Hippolytus, the Suda, and Eusebius, and a late chronology found in Apollodorus. In neither case can the value as historical evidence be great. The basic fact is that the doxographic tradition made Anaximenes both the pupil of Anaximander and the teacher of Anaxagoras. Both these statements go back to Theophrastus. In the case of Anaxagoras, Theophrastus' words probably did not imply contemporaneity (VS⁶ 59 A 41=Dox. 478), and even the word ἑταῖρος which Theophrastus may have used of Anaximenes in relation to Anaximander (VS⁶ 13 A 5=Dox. 476) probably refers to affinities in doctrine. It is probably no more than these statements of Theophrastus which were the basis for the calculations which produced the divergent hellenistic chronologies[2].

---

[1] Cf. G. Colli, ΦΥΣΙΣ ΚΡΥΠΤΕΣΘΑΙ ΦΙΛΕΙ, *Studi sulla filosofia greca* (Milano 1948) 110 n. 14.

[2] Cf. Simplicius, in Dox. 484, 17–18 with Diels' Prolegomena, 104 n. 4; Festugière, *Contemplation et vie contemplative selon Platon²*, 462–3.